

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 12750 220738Z

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OAKLEY FROM HOLBROOKE

PLEASE PASS ARMACOST, ABRAMOWITZ AND PLATT ONLY

E.O.11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR, JA

SUBJECT: COMMENTS OF YUKIO SATO ON DEFENSE MATTERS

1. IN DINNER DISCUSSION TONIGHT, YUKIO SATO TOLD ME THAT JDA WILL PROPOSE TO BUDGET BUREAU THAT JAPAN PROCEED NEXT YEAR TO BEGIN LICENSING AN ACQUISITION OF APPROXIMATELY 60 P3C'S AND 120 F-15'S. THIS WOULD, IF APPROVED BY NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL (WHICH IS ASSUMED), REPRESENT SATO'S OPINION A SIGNIFICANT JAPANESE SPEEDUP IN UPGRADING OF JAPAN'S SELF-DEFENSE CAPABILITY.

2. SATO SAID IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED THAT THE STIGMA OF THE LOCKHEED SCANCAL WAS NOW CONTAINABLE PROVIDED THAT THESE DECSIONS WERE SEEN AS OUTCOME OF JAPANESE INITIATIVES RATHER THAN AS RESULT OF U.S. PRESSURE. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT IN FACT ONE OF THE PRIMARY REASONS FOR THE CHANGE IN JAPANESE POLICY WAS THE "SKILLFUL WAY" THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD PRESENTED HIS POINT OF VIEW ON THIS ISSUE TO PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA IN MARCH.

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3. ON RELATED SUBJECT, SATO SAID THAT HE WAS BRIEFING MIHARA CONFIDENTIALLY AND SOMEWHAT OUT OF CHANNELS PRIOR TO MIHARA'S SCHEDULED VISIT TO WASHINGTON. HE URGED ABRAMOWITZ NOT TO USE MIHARA TALKS AS WAY OF RESOLVING LABOR ISSUES. THESE ISSUES, SATO SAID, COULD BEST BE RESOLVED SATISFACTORILY THROUGH EMBASSY CHANNELS

IN TOKYO.

4. FINALLY, SATO GAVE ASSESSMENT OF TOKAI MURA ISSUE IN STANDARD TERMS, REFLECTING AGAIN THE HIGH POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF THIS ISSUE. SPEAKING AS OFFICIAL WHO, WHILE WITH FINANCE MINISTRY, HAD RESTRUCTURED ATOMIC ENERGY BUDGET AND ALSO AS CLOSE FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES, SATO SAID HE WAS EXTREMELY FEARFUL OF CONSEQUENCE TO OVERALL US-JAPAN RELATIONS IF THE OUTCOME WERE PERCEIVED IN JAPAN IN NEGATIVE WAY.

5. SATO LOOKS FORWARD TO SEEING ALL THREE OF YOU IN NEAR FUTURE.

6. EMBASSY COMMENT: SECURITY CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 6 AT WHICH JAPANESE SIDE INTENDS TO BRIEF US ON NEXT YEAR'S DEFENSE BUDGET. WHILE IT SEEMS FAIRLY CERTAIN FUNDS FOR F-15'S WILL BE INCLUDED, IT IS LESS CERTAIN WHETHER P3C'S WILL SURVIVE INTER-MINISTERIAL NEGOTIATIONS. STEP FORWARD, HOWEVER, WAS PUBLICITY OVER WEEKEND TO JDA RECEIPT OF LOCKHEED LETTER AFFIRMING KODAMA CONTRACT HAD BEEN CANCELLED.

7. RE PARA 3, WE AGREE IT WOULD NOT BE ADVISEABLE, WHEN WE ARE JUST ABOUT TO EMBARK ON SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC LABOR-COST-SHARING PROPOSALS, TO ATTEMPT
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SETTLEMENT OF ISSUE DURING MIHARA VISIT. WE SEE NO HARM, HOWEVER, IN SECRETARY BROWN NOTING CONTINUED HIGH-LEVEL INTEREST IN SOLUTION, AND INDEED BELIEVE FAILURE TO AT LEAST MENTION LABOR COSTS WOULD CONVEY FALSE SIGNAL. NEXT SESSION OF LABOR-COST TALKS, INCIDENTIALLY, HAS BEEN DEFERRED AT MOFA REQUEST UNTIL EARLY SEPTEMBER, IN ORDER TO PERMIT FURTHER PROGRESS IN ON-GOING DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN MOFA, DFAA AND FINANCE.
MANSFIELD

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